

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DNI-00
	DODE-00	DOTE-00	PDI-00	DS-00	MEDE-00	DHSE-00	OIGO-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VCi-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	CDC-00	VCIE-00
	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NIMA-00	EPAU-00	PER-00	PM-00	GIWI-00
	MA-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	EVR-00	NCTC-00	FMP-00	EPAE-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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 FM AMEMBASSY APIA  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0419  
 AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY  
 INFO AMEMBASSY SUVA  
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 AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY  
 AMEMBASSY KOLONIA  
 AMEMBASSY KOROR  
 AMEMBASSY MAJURO  
 AMEMBASSY APIA

UNCLAS APIA 000002

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO EAP/ANP, EAP/CM AND EAP/PD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [WS](#)

SUBJECT: CHINA AID TO SAMOA: A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND-OR WHAT  
 HAVE YOU DONE FOR US LATELY?

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 1.Summary:  
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If a friend in deed is indeed a friend, then China is a very good friend to Samoa. China's deeds are many and magnificent-most recently a grand, multistory court building to house all of Samoa's various courts, as well as related offices, new, more fire resistant archive storage, and all the furnishings. The week that building was opened, an agreement was signed for a new Ministry of Health / hospital complex, and plans were unveiled for a six-story ministry of works building complete with conference center. Chinese support comes in many forms, represents nearly countless-millions (dollars, tala, yuan, whichever way you count it) and covers a staggering number of projects. (End summary).

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 2. China/Samoa Historical and Cultural Relations:  
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Chinese traders established trade depots throughout the Pacific in the late nineteenth century, including in Samoa, however it was the German-Samoa administration that helped give Samoa a lasting connection to China. To support agriculture, German-owned plantation companies imported indentured workers. By the late 1920's, the Chinese community (including inter-marriage with Samoans) had created Samoa's second largest minority group (second only to part European Samoans). Before (Western) Samoa's independence in 1962, the New Zealand-Samoa administration put forward policies to "export" the Chinese back to their homeland, nevertheless, a major percentage stayed. The remaining population continued to inter-marry the general Samoan population and established businesses which became the cornerstone of Samoa's economy in the 1960's, 70's, 80's, and even today. In acknowledging its minority societies, and their existence outside of the extended family/matai system, the newly independent Samoa incorporated in its constitution political rights for part-Europeans and Chinese to vote and be members of parliament by setting aside two seats to be elected by the independent (not village district) voters. Currently one of the highest Government of Samoa (GoS) officials of Chinese descent is the Minister of Finance, Niko Lee Hang.

Today, the 1900's indentured Chinese laborer descendants have

intermarried, assimilated and gained citizen/political rights equal to those of indigenous Samoa population. Although they are distinguished through their mixed Samoan-Asian facial features, distinctive Chinese surnames and predominant business success, they consider themselves, and are considered by other Samoans simply as Samoan.

In the past 20 years or so, a new influx of Chinese and other Asians has come to Samoa. Unlike the earlier group that assimilated, the newcomers tend to stay within their minority groups, and where earlier Chinese are now assimilated into all Samoan Christian denominations, some of the new Asian settlers include the first small number of Muslims, or other non-Christian religions. With landownership tied to customary land (traditional family/village groups), the new arrivals have chosen to focus on small enterprise and the service sector, finding some success, but still being seen somewhat as outsiders, drawing predictable curiosity and criticism.

### 13. China/Samoa Diplomatic Relations:

GoS established diplomatic relations with PRC in November, 1975.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) Embassy in Samoa was set up in 1976. (The U.S. expanded our consulate to an Embassy in 1989; it is currently still a single officer post with limited services). Samoa established their own embassy in Beijing in 2009; one of 6 Samoan embassies in the world (note: there is no embassy to the U.S. alone, however there is a mission in New York for the United Nations that also interacts with Washington and Ottawa). The embassy in China was an outcome of Samoa PM Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi's state visit to meet Premier Wen Jiabao in September 2008. The Chinese embassy in Apia, a compound of several buildings, has a Chinese staff of several officers; the Samoan Ambassador to PRC, Tapusalaia Terry Toomata (former Deputy Permanent Secretary of Samoa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) is representative of the importance Samoa places on that mission.

PRC relations to Samoa and the Pacific have been cemented through its economic and infrastructural aid to the Pacific. Following Premier Jiabao's 2006 visit to the Pacific, the PRC announced an intention to increase economic cooperation with Pacific island states-more economic aid, abolish tariffs from PIC LCD, cancel outstanding debt, distribute free anti-malaria medicine, provide training for over 2000 government and technical staff (completed within one year). China increased aid to the Pacific from USD \$33 million 2005 to USD \$293 million in 2007.

### 14. China Supports Samoa Through:

**BUILDINGS:** The following buildings have been gifts. In most cases the design, construction workers and often materials have been Chinese:

1994- Government Building (5 story office of Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs and Cabinet)

1995-Ministry of Women (Mother's Center), Sogi Hall (new renovations underway to be completed in 2010)

2007- Apia Sports Complex renovation- USD \$3.5 million and related Aquatic Center USD \$7.3 million (anchor building of athletic complex completed so Samoa could host 2007 South Pacific Games).

2008- Parliamentary Office Complex (multistory office building next to Parliament to provide office space for all members) USD \$17 million.

2010- Ministry of Justice and courts complex- USD \$6 million (opened January 26, 2010)

2012- Government Office Complex and Conference Center- USD \$44 million (concessional loan currently under way).

Schools buildings- since 2000 China has built three public schools at the cost of USD \$1 million each.

LOANS: In 2008- Samoa pushed through the Export Import Bank of China Act to allow borrowing of concessional loans (comment: with some consternation on the part of observers and the Samoan opposition who charge not all loans are made public).

2009 (signed in 2010 Jan) concessional loan of USD \$6 million to be used for budget support, including education.

2010 concessional loan of USD \$30.7 million the Samoa Ministry of Health Project (2010-2011--Ministry of Health complex and Phase I of a teaching hospital).

OTHER PROJECTS: For the National Hospital, in 2007- CTC X-ray scanner provided and several volunteer doctors; 2009- Swine flu protective gear was provided. (Note: In 1918 over 80% of the Samoan population was infected by Spanish Flu; over 23% died. When H1N1 threatened, GoS took it seriously. They asked for help, including from the U.S. We provided nothing, not even a response. China provided assistance). World Expo (Shanghai) 2010: China has spent USD \$11 million on the Pacific pavilion with USD \$650,000 going towards Samoa's preparations, an event that is expected to be attended by a large number of GoS officials and staff. Journalist Tour: In 2008 China sponsored a journalist tour of several cities throughout China for journalists from Samoa. They were also present for the meeting of Samoan and Chinese dignitaries, and the trade expo. Others were part of another tour to cover the Olympics.

Technical Assistance and Training: There are currently 53 Samoan students in China undertaking graduate and post graduate studies under Chinese Scholarships. Samoans are eligible to apply through the regional China-Pacific Islands Forum Scholarship Scheme whereby Samoan students won five of the nine scholarships in 2009. China also provided at least 25 scholarships annually for Samoan students as part of its China-Samoa Scholarship Scheme. China supports a Technical Cooperation Training Program (similar to Department's International Visitors program) that sends at least 15 candidates yearly on short term 4 month placements and training in China. A seven member team of Chinese doctors are working within the National Health Service-their contract is expected to end soon and a new team will come for 2010. In 2007, 22 Chinese coaches were sent to train Samoa's team in for South Pacific Games.

Disaster Relief Assistance: In response to the Sept. 29, 2009 earthquake and tsunami, China provided USD \$100,000 for GoS relief efforts. In 2004, after Cyclone Heta China also donated USD \$100,000 as a relief grant to Samoa. Last year Samoa reciprocated by sending a disaster donation to China after the devastating earthquake there.

Other supports include business and trade agreements, tourism support, projects for schools (buildings and equipment), and vehicles, including in 2004 a fleet of 20 limos worth USD \$1.25 million for the Pacific Forum leader's meeting. China hosted a delegation including, among others, the Head of State for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The Chinese government presented an assistance of USD \$100,000 to Samoan government for expenses of the later Head of State's state funeral in 2007.

#### ----- 15. Playing the PD Game: -----

From formal ceremonies, high level visitors, speeches and events, the Chinese make sure they get media attention for their efforts, which is only fair. The journalist tour was an example of these efforts. In addition, their "soft power" approach is expanding. Whereas before they made quiet arrangements with the

government for a building or project, today the Ambassador is frequently shown in the newspaper, surrounded by students, handing a computer or copier over to a school. In the misinformation category, they may also be active. There are occasional anti-American anonymous letters to the editor that have an amazingly consistent style-as if the same writer or writers were following a plan.

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¶6. Face Time:  
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In September 2008 PM Tuilaepa met Premier Jiabao in Beijing-a meeting that included Samoa's Deputy PM and 5 associate ministers. In past 2 years two delegations of high level representatives of China's central government have been here to celebrate the opening of new buildings, and to sign agreements for new projects.

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¶7. But, deep down, they really like US better-right?  
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(Comment) Deep thinkers may like to dwell on the philosophical underpinnings shared between the United States and Samoa-democratic principles, Christian beliefs, etc. but how many deep thinkers are there--really? Old timers remain grateful that the U.S. helped Samoa during the Second World War, and even after the cyclones of the early 90's. But people who remember those events are no longer on the ascendancy; they are on the decline. Today, people tend to question the motivation behind China's gifts. Tomorrow, they'll probably only remember the gifts. Anyone who asked an average Samoan in this century "who helps Samoa?" will get the answer, "New Zealand, Australia and China"~ and not necessarily in that order. If actions speak louder than words, than our actions, louder than our statements of support, are saying, "the Pacific and Samoa in particular, are not really important to the United States." As the U.S. representative on the ground in Samoa, I can't help but draw comparisons, especially as those around me do so every day.

YEAGER